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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2013

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/68/L.30 and Add.1)*]

68/126. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolution 67/104 of 17 December 2012 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and its other related resolutions,

Recalling also that in its resolution 67/104 the General Assembly proclaimed the period 2013–2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures,

Encouraging, in this regard, activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect and to create, at the global level, and also at the regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding,

Recalling its resolution 64/14 of 10 November 2009 on the Alliance of Civilizations, in which it welcomed efforts to promote greater understanding and respect among people from different civilizations, cultures and religions,

Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Noting that interreligious and intercultural dialogue has made significant contributions to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, as well as to the promotion of a culture of peace and an improvement of overall relations among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and among nations,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

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Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Bearing in mind that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities contributes towards peace, mutual understanding and friendship among people of different cultures and nations and that these diversities should be made part of intercultural and interreligious dialogue efforts, as appropriate,

Emphasizing the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and in this regard noting the close links between cultural diversity, dialogue and development,

Noting the various initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels for enhancing dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated,

Welcoming the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in promoting intercultural dialogue, as well as the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Anna Lindh Foundation and the ongoing work of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna,

Welcoming also the provisions of the Vientiane Declaration on interfaith dialogue, adopted on 6 November 2012 by the Asia-Europe Meeting, and recognizing the importance it places on interfaith dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development,

Acknowledging the positive contribution of individuals and of relevant civil society organizations to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and the culture of peace,

Recognizing the contributions of the media and of new information and communications technology to promoting peoples' understanding of different cultures and religions, including through the promotion of dialogue,

Reaffirming the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders, including young men and women as relevant actors, in interreligious and intercultural dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at various levels, which aims to challenge prejudices and improve mutual understanding,

Recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace and the need for voices of moderation from all religions and beliefs to work together in order to build a more secure and peaceful world,

1. *Reaffirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious and intercultural dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[2]

3. *Recognizes* the importance of interreligious dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and calls upon Member States to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and

[2] A/68/286.

intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals;

4. *Also recognizes* the efforts by relevant stakeholders to foster peaceful and harmonious coexistence within societies by promoting respect for religious and cultural diversity, including by engendering sustained and robust interaction among various segments of society;

5. *Notes* the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on intercultural dialogue and its contribution to interreligious dialogue, as well as its activities related to the culture of peace and non-violence and its focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and subregional levels;

6. *Welcomes* the launch of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), for which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in consultation with Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, will provide a plan of action to enhance interreligious and intercultural dialogue and to promote tolerance and mutual understanding;

7. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;

8. *Welcomes* the outcome of the Seventh Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue, on harnessing the benefits and addressing the challenges of migration through interfaith and intercultural dialogue, held in Manila in 2011, and looks forward to the Asia-Europe Meeting High-level International Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue, to be held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation in July 2014;

9. *Also welcomes* the outcome document entitled "Vienna Declaration on the Alliance of Civilizations" of the Fifth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Vienna on 27 and 28 February 2013, and looks forward to the Sixth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in August 2014;

10. *Underlines* the importance of moderation as a value within societies for countering extremism in all its aspects and for further contributing to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation;

11. *Welcomes* the efforts by the media to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, encourages the further promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but that these shall be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;

12. *Also welcomes* the efforts to use information and communications technology, including the Internet, to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including through the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal established following the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and

Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila in 2010, and encourages relevant stakeholders to utilize the opportunity to disseminate their best practices and experiences on interreligious and intercultural dialogue by contributing to the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal;

13. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held in New York in October 2007, including the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions, as well as the ideas suggested during the third High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, held in Paris in November 2012;

14. *Acknowledges* the active engagement of the United Nations system with faith-based organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and in bringing together people of different cultures, religions, faiths or beliefs to discuss common issues and objectives;

15. *Also acknowledges* the important role of civil society, including academia, in fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and encourages support for practical measures that mobilize civil society, including building capacities, opportunities and frameworks for cooperation;

16. *Invites* Member States to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace and sustained development, including through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals;

17. *Recognizes* that the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat plays a valuable role as focal point within the Secretariat on the issue, and encourages it to continue to interact and coordinate with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

69th plenary meeting
18 December 2013